

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 03398 020734Z
ACTION COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5731

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TOKYO 3398

DEPT PASS COMMERCE FOR WEIL/GARNITZ, STR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, BTRA, JA, US
SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE: JAPAN IMPORT PROMOTION
MISSION TO THE U.S.--IKEDA'S OFFER OF "WHITE SHIP"

1. AT MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR ON FEB. 28, YOSHIZO IKEDA, PRESIDENT OF MITSUI AND CO. AND LEADER OF SUBJECT MISSION, RAISED HIS "PERSONAL" IDEA THAT JAPAN SHOULD OFFER TO THE U.S. USE OF THE "SHIN SAKURA MARU," A FLOATING TRADE FAIR SHIP WHICH HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 1972 CARRYING JAPANESE EXHIBITS TO PORT CITIES.

2. THE VESSEL IS OWNED BY THE JAPAN INDUSTRY FLOATING FAIR ASSOCIATION, COMPOSED OF 119 MAJOR JAPANESE FIRMS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS. IKEDA, WHO IS PRESIDENT OF ASSOCIATION, WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IDEA OF OFFERING TO THE U.S. A "WHITE SHIP" AS A REVERSAL OF PERRY'S BLACK SHIPS FOR DRAMATIC IMPACT. IKEDA'S CONCEPT IS THAT THE VESSEL COULD BE STOCKED WITH U.S. PRODUCTS AND EXHIBITS AND VISIT ALL THE MAJOR PORTS OF JAPAN.

3. IKEDA TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD OBTAINED CLEARANCE FROM MITI MINISTER KOMOTO TO MAKE OFFER, AND THAT HE INTENDED TO DISCUSS HIS IDEA IN
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WASHINGTON. HE ASKED THAT WE MAKE NO OFFICIAL REPORT OF HIS SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, SINCE HE PREFERRED RAISE IT ON HIS OWN IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN INITIAL REACTION.

4. PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE MERELY TO ALERT YOU TO IKEDA'S INTENTION. EISELT WILL HAVE WITH HIM BOOK-LETS DESCRIBING VESSEL. THIS EXHIBIT TECHNIQUE COULD

REACH CITIES NOT OTHERWISE EXPOSED TO SUCH SHOWS,
AND JAPANESE WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO MEET MUCH
OF THE COST. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WHITE SHIP
EXHIBIT TO JAPAN AS SYMBOL OF A NEW, MORE BALANCED
TRADING RELATIONSHIP COULD BE TREMENDOUS.

5. IN CONNECTION WITH U.S. BICENTENNIAL, DENTSU
ADVERTISING LTD. HAD STUDIED POSSIBILITY OF UTI-
LIZING VESSEL IN MANNER SUGGESTED BY IKEDA, BUT
ABANDONED PROJECT BECAUSE OF COST CONSIDERATIONS
AS WELL AS DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN OBTAINING
EXHIBIT PRODUCTS. NEVERTHELESS, IDEA SHOULD BE
WORTH SERIOUS STUDY IN PRESENT CONTEXT.
MANSFIELD

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